

## CATAWBA MEMORIAL IN FORT MILL'S CONFEDERATE PARK

by Louise Pettus

Downtown Fort Mill has a vest-pocket sized park, known as Confederate Park, with four interesting statues. Capt. Samuel Elliott White had a hand in the building of all of them.

The first statue, dedicated on December 22, 1891, has a 6-ft statue of a Confederate soldier topping a 9-ft base. S. E. White conceived the idea of having a subscription drive among veterans and their families to pay for the statue which has 170 names of Civil War veterans from Fort Mill township. It was the first South Carolina upcountry Confederate soldier statue.

Two monuments were unveiled on May 21, 1895. White paid for both. One was dedicated to the women of the Confederacy in honor of their work and support on the home front. The other, 13-ft tall and of fine quality Italian marble, was dedicated to the faithful slaves, the only such statue anywhere.

Five years later, John McKee Spratt teamed up with Captain White to erect a statue honoring the services of the Catawba Indians during the war. The Rev. James H. Thornwell gave a history and a reason for the monument.

Spratt had sent conveyances out to the reservation to bring in a number of Catawba Indians, including all the surviving veterans. Ben Harris, son of a Confederate veteran, had written his own speech for the occasion. Among other things, Harris said, "Love makes the Indian a friend of the white man." He added that love had prompted White and Spratt to build the monument to the Catawba Indians.

Harris said, "If white man had done Indian justice like White and Spratt a good many of them would have been educated and able to make a good speech." He then predicted that within 50 years, the Catawbas would be educated enough to make as good a speech as the white man.

Billy Harris, another Catawba, spoke next. He thanked the ladies of Fort Mill for the good meal and reminded his audience that the Catawbas had fought

against the white men of South Carolina only once. His reference was to a Catawba alliance with other southeastern Indians during the Yemassee Wars in 1715-17. The Indians were fighting about the manner in which they were treated by unscrupulous traders and white encroachment on their hunting lands.

Rev. A. L. Stough spoke next. He said that the Catawbas had much to teach the whites. Stough thought that we should not forget that the great Catawba chief King Haigler sent the first prohibition petition on record to Justice Hanley of the S. C. Supreme Court.

A photograph was taken of the Indians around the monument. Does that photograph still exist?

The limestone monument to the Indians stands 10 1/2 ft atop a 4-ft brick foundation. A prairie scene is carved on one side showing a buffalo in the foreground. On the opposite side a wood land scene shows turkeys feeding. Above, is the statue of a crouching Indian beside a stump with a bow drawn as if he has just killed a deer.

One of the inscriptions reads, "Erected to the Catawba Indians by Sam'l Elliott White and John McKee Spratt. The latter is a descendant of Thos. 'Kanawah' Spratt and the former a descendant of Wm. Elliott, two of the first settlers in this portion of the Indian Land (1755). On the opposite side is a history of the Catawba Tribe.

On the east side: "Some noted Catawbas—King Haigler, Gen. New River, Gen. Jim Kegg, Col. David Harris, Major John Joe, Capt. Billie George, Lieut. Phillips Kegg, Sallie New River, Pollie Ayrers, Peter Harris. On the west side is the names of 17 Catawbas who fought in the Confederate army.

Samuel Elliott White not only donated the four statues (and the land on which they stand) to the town of Fort Mill, he also founded the town's first cotton mill, the Fort Mill Manufacturing Co., forerunner of Springs Industries, Inc.

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